



Mayor Brindle's COVID-19 Update July 10, 2020



CONFIRMED CASES

- Today, there are 174,68 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in New Jersey, with another 667 still under investigation. Currently, the County has 16,460 cases, with Westfield reporting ten additional cases since Tuesday (two on Wednesday, one on Thursday, and seven today), bringing our total to 299, a concerning uptick which I'll address below.
- For a more detailed breakdown of statewide numbers, visit the NJ Department of Health COVID-19 Dashboard.

STATE AND COUNTY UPDATES

- On Wednesday, Governor Murphy signed an Executive Order requiring face coverings in outdoor public spaces when social distancing is not possible. There are exceptions for individuals two years of age and younger, when eating/drinking at an outdoor dining establishment, and when wearing a mask would inhibit health or safety.
- The NJ Motor Vehicles Commission has extended the expiration dates for driver's licenses, permits, non-driver IDs, commercial registrations, inspections, and temporary tags. For full details, visit www.NJMVC.gov.
- The Paycheck Protection Program resumed accepting applications July 6 after the program's extension legislation was signed. The new deadline to apply for a Paycheck Protection Program loan is August 8, 2020, and businesses that want to qualify for loan forgiveness now have 24 weeks instead of eight weeks to spend PPP funds. For more information, visit <https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans/coronavirus-relief-options/paycheck-protection-program>.

LOCAL UPDATES

- Quimby Street will be closed to vehicular traffic once again this weekend, with another great schedule of events. Come train outside with AlphaFit, join Brassy Buddha or Satsang for yoga, enjoy a total body workout with Outrun Your Fork, or take a class with Lulu Zumba. Of course, please continue to support our local retailers and restaurants -- and enjoy the downtown events while wearing your mask outdoors and maintaining proper distance at all times. For the full weekend schedule, visit westfieldtoday.com.
- The Westfield Memorial Library will reopen to the public on a limited basis on Monday, July 13. Due to social distancing guidelines, only 50 people will be permitted in the library at any time. Hours will be Monday through Thursday, 10:00AM – 5:30PM, and 10:00 – 4:30 Friday and Saturday. The public will be able to browse for and check out books in the library. All other in-building activities remain suspended at this time. Please remember that face coverings and social distancing are required, and restrooms will not be available, so please plan accordingly. Fines and fees remain suspended.
- Lastly, I want to take some time to address the recent notable increase in COVID-19 cases in our community. As I indicated above, we have ten new cases in just three days since my last update. Following nearly two weeks of no new cases, we have now seen the number of cases increase by 17 since June 30.

Of the seven cases reported today, five are in the age range of 17-19 (three of which are associated with a party and two are still being investigated), one is in the age range of 20-25 (from exposure to a household contact), and one is in the age range of 30-35 (exposure still being investigated). Four of the seven cases from the previous week are attributed to travel to states under the quarantine order.

I have seen the alert circulating today about the Westfield Urgent Care Center's confirmed cases, in addition to numerous other messages sent to me about known new cases within the community, mostly among 18-24 year olds emanating from Fourth of July and graduation parties. There is typically a 48 hour lag time between a patient's positive test results and those cases being reported to us in the statewide system, so I fully expect these numbers to rise over the next few days.

This is an incredibly frustrating development after the many months of dedication by our residents to minimize community spread. Perhaps two weeks of no cases provided a false sense of security. While young adults may not typically experience the severity of the virus, they can easily spread it to more vulnerable members of the community and we could go right back to square one. I would urge everyone to strongly reconsider any plans they have to host or attend graduation parties this weekend with anyone other than family members. Try to avoid any event where distance can't be maintained and face coverings won't be worn, as these are the types of gatherings that can easily increase the community spread we are starting to experience. Let's work together to stop it now.

If you feel you have been exposed, please do two things: Get tested, and begin to self-quarantine immediately for 14 days. It's important to do both. I'm attaching some helpful guidelines from the NJ Department of Health as a reference. Please remember that if you are a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, you still need to quarantine for a full 14 days after the last exposure, even if you do test negative, as the virus can incubate for up to 14 days after exposure.

I also want to remind everyone to fully cooperate with contact tracers if they call you. Our Department of Health has worked tirelessly to track the cases in Westfield that provide us with helpful data about trends and community spread, and yet many residents refuse to provide them with information that would benefit us all. Any contact tracing information you provide is protected by HIPAA and serves a very valuable purpose in managing this virus.

While it's not unexpected to see an increase in cases following the lifting of many restrictions, I am extremely concerned about the community spread aspect coupled with an upcoming weekend of many graduation celebrations in the works. We are all anxious to have our businesses reopen, our sports resume, and our kids back to school. Let's continue to do our part to ensure that we can continue to move forward.